SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: I may mention here that DAVP at our request organised a photo exhibition and an exhibition of paintings, including the paintings done by school children of some schools in Delhi. The exhibition is ready. We have already taken it to some areas outside Delhi. If I may mention, I have taken it to my own constituency. We welcome State Governments asking us to have this exhibition in their States. We will liaise with the Information Ministry and do the needful in the matter.

DR. G. VIJAY MOHAN REDDY: I would like to know whether the aspect of the African people's struggle will be reflected properly in the exhibition.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Yes. We will do all necessary things in this matter.

SHRI DEBA PRASAD RAY: Madam, when this festival was being held in Delhi, the most interesting item which was actually presented on that occasion was not by the Africans. I am very candid in saying it here. It was actually presented by Siddis, a community from Gujarat which came to India thousands of years ago from Abyssinia. They have become Indians. They speak Gujarati, but they have not lost their cultural tradition They were actually brought here to give their traditional performance on that occasion which received tremendous ovation and appreciation from the audience which witnessed it. In view of this, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how many people of this kind have come from different parts of the world, settled down in India, become Indians but have not lost their culture and tradition and whether the Government will give encouragement to them so that their culture and tradition is kept alive.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Madam, it is true that this group is there. It is a very good thing. It shows the nature of this country with diverse cultures which are very valuable. We, however, do not propose to have a survey as to how many people are there because a citizen of this country is a citizen of this country and this is what matters.

Acation taken on the suggestions of the Sub-Committee on Handloom Development Schemes

*204. SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE:†
DR. R. K. PODDAR:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Sub-Committee on restructuring of handloom development schemes and programmes has submitted its suggestions to Government;

(b) if so, when did it submit its suggestions and what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what action Government have taken on the suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) No, Madam.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Madam, here is a Press clipping with me dated 19-6-87 which says that the sub-committee on restructuring of handloom development schemes and programmes has submitted its recommendations to the Government. But I am astonished to see here that the Government says that they have not received the recommendations. Anyway, whether they have received the recommendations or not, it appears, Government intends to undertake some welfare measures for the handloom weavers. Madam, the weavers

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Kanak Mukherjee.

are of two kinds. One is, employed by the master-weavers and the other is the self-employed group, having their own looms. I would like to know whether the welfare schemes will cover both these types of weavers. Secondly, Madam,...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have asked your question. (*Interruptions*) Do you want information from the Minister?

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: This is my information. (*Interruptions*) My question is whether the Central Government intends to do something for the weavers or not.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have put your question. Now, the Minister will answer.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Madam, we are very much conscious of the importance of the handloom sector in our national economy. It gives employment to a very large number of people. Our policy has all along been and would continue to be to give support to this sector to the extent possible. The sub-committee which the hon. Member mentioned was appointed by the standing committee on handloom of the All-India Handicrafts and Handlooms Board. This sub-committee was appointed by the standing committee of the Board to review all the welfare schemes which are being handled by the Government of India at the present moment for the welfare of the weavers. I have a list of these schemes which are in existence now, but we want them to be reviewed from time to time, so that we are able to improve the working of the existing schemes or add more schemes or amplify them in a proper way. Apart from the Sub-Committee, we have engaged Institute of Rural Management, Anand, to go into the schemes on their own also. So, this Sub-Committee's report has not gone to the Standing Committee itself, much less to the Government. The work of the Sub-Committee is going on. Apart from that the Rural Management Institute is also looking into all the welfare schemes. The report of the Sub-Committee will go to the Standing Committee and the Board and then they will come to the Government with necessary recommendations of the Board. And then we will see what has to be done on that.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: May I ask, Madam, whether the Government has thought of some administrative machinery by giving representation to the representatives of the weaver associations to implement the schemes? Otherwise, we all know that the Government has got so many welfare schemes for the coir employees, for the beedi workers and so on but no useful purpose is served. The money is disbursed but actually the workers are not benefited. Now the textile policy of the Government is in favour of the large scale textile mills. The standard cloth which was produced by the mills earlier has now been passed on to the handloom, which is not profitable at all because the textile mills sell the yarn at a very high cost to the weavers. So, it is not at all profitable or economical. May I know what steps the Government propose to take to help the handloom weavers, to guarantee them regular employment because lakhs of handloom weavers are now without employment?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Our Policy is that the handloom weavers cooperatives are strengthened to the extent possible so that they can get yarn at a proper price. We have a number of schemes to assist the weavers cooperatives in States. But I am sorry to say that one of the weakest cooperative structures in the country is in West Bengal and if the hon. Member can do something on that, we will be able to do much more for the weavers of West Bengal.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Dr. Poddar.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Madam. I have a question to

ask. I have my second supplementary.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have already asked two supplementaries. Anyway, I will allow you one question later on. Let Dr. Poddar put the question.

DR.R. K. PODDAR: Madam, since the question of West Bengal has arisen and the Minister pleads ignorance of the Committee's report, I would like to inform him that the report of the Committee has appeared in the press about three months ago. Anyway, I do not want to further embarrass the Minister, but the question is that within its limited means West Bengal has improved the lot of the weavers by delivering those poor weavers from the clutches of the middleman, by encouraging the cooperatives, by advancing low-interest loans and buying their products through the State Government-sponsored agencies. Is the Central Government planning to introduce this kind of a thing?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: I have already said that our policy is to strengthen the cooperative societies and just to give an example, I would mention a few of the schemes. One is to give assistance to NCDC for weavers' cooperative spinning mills, then, share capital assistance to primary weavers' cooperative societies, share capital assistance to spex weavers' cooperative societies, managerial subsidy to cooperative societies, etc. We have a number of schemes by which the cooperative structure in the States can be strengthened by our assistance apart from what the State Governments themselves do. Some States, including West Bengal, have also got Handloom Development Corporation. With them also we cooperate to the extent possible and I think the Central schemes should be made use of by the State Governments for the help of the weavers. We give various types of subsidy for Janata cloth scheme. If the weavers' cooperatives take over manufacture of Janata cloth, its manufacture will be transferred from NTC mills to the handloom sector. There is big scope in this and if the State Governments and the cooperative institutions can demonstrate their capacity to handle more and more work, we can transfer Janata cloth scheme to a considerable extent to the State Governments.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Some time back, the Government took a very laudable step to protect the interests of handloom weavers by enacting a specific law to reserve certain items of cloth to be manufactured exclusively by the handloom sector. However, the Rules framed under the Act postulate that the piece of cloth could be sent to a chemical analyst for the purpose of determining whether it was manufactured on a handloom or a powerloom. This was a patent defect in the rules which was admitted by the Government some time back. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether steps have been taken to remove such defects in the rules so as to make them effective.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Madam, there is a law which reserves certain types of cloth, like dhotis, sarees etc. of certain types, exclusively for the handloom sector, which means neither the mill sector nor the powerloom sector can manufacture those items of textiles. After this reservation law was enacted, hundreds, virtually thousands, of writ petitions were filed in the various High Courts by mill interests and powerloom interests, with the result that this reservation order was more or less stopped to a certain extent. We have gone to the Supreme Court with the request that all the cases pending in the various High Courts should be collected at one place, the Supreme Court should call all of them here and opine about the constitutional validity of our reservation order. I am glad to report, Madam, that our request has been accepted and the High Court have been restrained from

passing fresh orders in this respect. When all the cases are collected here and the hearing takes place, I think we will be able to enforce this reservation order in a particular way and in a very effective way.

As regards the observation of the hon. Member that some defects have come in the course of implementation of the reservation order, well, we are constantly reviewing it with the technical people. We want that our reservation order should be clear-cut and such as is understood by everybody so that it could be implemented property.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Madam, restructuring of handloom development scheme requires immediate attention, while the report of the Sub Committee is awaited. Now it is likel to take more time. We are exporting yarn to the tune of Rs. 250 crores with 7.12 per cent price support. You are no doubt aware of the fact that the price of yarn has gone up by 35 per cent. Meanwhile there is no marketing facility. The individual weavers remain there, their housing facilities remain there, their difficulties remain there and the life of these weavers is so miserable. I can give you a sample survey of three towns with one lakh population to show how miserable a life they are leading. Your Sub Committee's report is yet to come. Why do you not make a sample survey and give some relief to these miserable people who are living such a bad life on account of so many reasons?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Madam, when I said that the sub Committee is reviewing the welfare schemes and other schemes to assist the handloom sector, it does not mean that these schemes are not being implemented. They are ongoing schemes which have been in existence for a long time. What we want through this Sub Committee is that these schemes be reviewed and they should suggest how the present on-going schemes can be modified or amended and what new schemes should be added. So, it does not mean that our work is not going on. It is going on perfectly all right. And we are spending, just to give an example, Rs. 28 crores this year from the Central Government's Budget for Plan expenditure and Rs. 131 crores for non-Plan expenditure. But the problem of an individual weaver who is not in the co-operative fold, is real. I admit what the hon. Member says. The only solution, Madam, is that they should be brought within the co-operative fold. We have been urging the State Governments to strengthen weaver's co-operatives because it is only through institutional set-up that we can help them enrich.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Madam, the crucial problem of the handloom sector is the accumulation of stock. To reduce the stock, the number of rebate days should be increased. But, unfortunately, our Government has decreased the number of days from 60 to 30. At the same time, as far as the khadi goods are concerned, it has allowed for them to continue 90 days. During the Kerala elections, as far as the coir goods are concerned the number of rebate days has been increased, but as far as the handloom sector is concerned, they have been decreased. Will this Government come forward to reduce the stock and protect the interests of the handloom sector and restore the number of rebate days from 30 to 60 as it had enjoyed in the past?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Madam, it is true that for a short time the rebate days were increased to 60. But the practice more or less has been, and it is also now, that there are 30 rebate days. There are the national expos which are four every year in different parts of the country, and they go from three weeks to four weeks even. So, if you take the national expos and the

rebate that is given there and the 30 days which they can organise on their own, I think, they are quite sufficient.

One of the schemes that is being reviewed by the Sub-Committee, Madam, is whether the rebate should continue or not. It is a very controversial thing. Even among the weaving community and the handloom sector there are two different opinions as to which is the best way of helping the weaver, whether it is through the present rebate system or through some other system that goes on. While we intend to continue the present rebate system and strengthen it to the extent possible, the Sub-Committee mentioned in the main question is also looking into this question as well.

SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Madam, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the objectives of the Bunkar Sevak Scheme whether this said Scheme is being implemented all over the country and what benefits the weavers are getting out of the said Scheme.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Madam, I have got a whole list of schemes which are being implemented, and I will pass on to the hon. Member so that he can know more details he wants.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Kanak Mukherjee. Please be brief.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE: Thank you, Madam, for giving me the second chance. There is one point to which I would like to draw attention. Lakhs of women weavers are there in the handloom industry, and they work on a very very low wage, and most of them get unemployed during the major part of the year. And they do not enjoy the benefit of the law of equal wage for equal work. Just have statistics and have a survey. You will see in what miserable conditions the women handloom-weavers are. So, will the Government take proper measures to guarantee the employment of the women throughout the year in the handloom sector and implement equal pay for equal work for which we have got the law, but in most of the places it is not at all implemented?

Thirdly, there should be facilities and benefits available in connection with maternity and child Welfare. Will the Government take note of these things?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: Madam, giving employment all the year round to men weavers or women weavers can only be considered in the context of the production of the handloom cloth. If a particular society of which these weavers are members, works in an efficient way, they can produce good quality things, the realisation per metre could be higher and they can get employment for a larger number of days. Government cannot guarantee employment all the time to weavers because our schemes do not contemplate any direct employment of that nature. But for improving the effectiveness and the earning capacity of weavers, we have a number of schemes. For example, we have schemes for giving improved types of looms-Chitaranjan looms and other types of looms. Those who have made use of these types of looms and retrained the members of the cooperative society, they have increased their earnings. We have weavers service centres which give ideas about designs and marketing. And if proper use is made of all the facilities that have been provided by us, I think the earning capacity of the weavers will be improved.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.